

(Washington, DC) - **Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA), Ranking Member of the Ways & Means Committee on Health**, released the following statement in advance of today's health care meeting at the White House.□ Herger, along with other Members of Congress, will attend an afternoon long discussion on health care with President Obama, which will include 'breakout' sessions to address specific concerns about our health care system.□ Herger's remarks follow below:

"Skyrocketing health care costs are increasingly squeezing the budgets of families across America. Now, more than ever, we must find a way to fix our health care system. My fellow Republicans and I are committed to ensuring that every American has access to affordable, high-quality health care and we are ready to work with President Obama to make this a reality.

"With the ongoing difficult economic climate, Americans cannot afford to have a government-run health care system paid for by massive tax hikes that would cripple our economy. Instead, we must preserve what works about our system now while focusing on fixing the broken parts. People must remain free to choose their own doctors and we need to guarantee that government bureaucrats are left out of medical decisions, both large and small, so that they can be made by patients and their doctors. I'm hopeful that this meeting will be a step forward to truly resolving the serious health care issues we're facing today."